

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**LAUREL HILL ADAPTIVE REUSE CITIZEN TASK FORCE MEETING**  
November 6, 2003 / 7:00 PM

**Task Force Members Present:** Tim Sargeant (Chair), Robert W. Cosgriff (Vice-Chair), Albert B. Akers, Beverly Cosham, Neal McBride, Douglas M. Wren, Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, Liz Bradsher (alternate for Springfield District)

**Task Force Members Absent:** Dave Patten, Brian Scott Tishuk, Irma A. Clifton, Penny Wilkinson (Represented by Liz Bradsher)

**Department of Planning and Zoning:** Marianne Gardner, Charlene Fuhrman-Schulz, Jim Zook and Linda Blank

**EDAW:** Paul Moyer and David Nissenson, consultant from ERA

The Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force was briefed on a preliminary concept developed for the Central/Maximum area by a panel from the Urban Land Institute. ULI is a nonprofit research and education organization that represents the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. A team of ULI members, known as the Technical Assistance Panel, was invited to develop a preliminary concept as part of the Task Force's planning process.

The ULI panel developed its concept for the Central/Maximum site during a two-day planning exercise in October.

NOTE: The Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force has not endorsed the ULI concept or any other concept or proposal for the Central/Maximum site. The Task Force is not expected to submit final recommendations and concepts for the Central/Maximum site until spring 2004.

**I: Presentation of the ULI Technical Assistance Panel Recommendations:**

Presentation by ULI:

The ULI panel developed a residential and village center concept to adaptively reuse the majority of contributing structures on the 85-acre Central/Maximum site and be financially self-sufficient. The concept includes the following:

- Approximately 400 new and adaptively developed market-rate residential housing units within the penitentiary and reformatory areas
- Development of approximately 140,000 (or less) square feet of commercial development to offset the high cost of redeveloping the rest of the property, by creating a village center concept with a "Main Street" feel. Commercial development would include a 40,000 square foot grocery store, as well as neighborhood-serving retail and professional office space. Some of the commercial development would be located on the baseball field in the Central/Maximum area. However, the

historic bleachers would be saved (Note: The ULI panel suggested a smaller baseball field was possible).

Carrie Albee, an architectural historian on the ULI panel, identified important preservation issues that the Panel took into account. The preservation issues included the Laurel Hill House, the Penitentiary and Reformatory, the Wall, the preservation of open space, preserving contributing buildings that have not been altered and consideration of demolition of buildings that have been altered and adherence to the Secretary of Interior standards.

ULI panelist Richard Perlmutter identified some of the concepts looked at and why they were rejected. They included a Town Center – rejected; site not visible enough from the road; a Conference Center – rejected, too many in other locations; an Educational Center – perhaps but difficult to find a user; Residential Retirement – rejected – active adult community already being developed; and Museum Civic – unlikely and would require significant funding.

ULI panelist Lee Quill identified opportunities that could strengthen the viability of the adaptive reuse. For example, the penitentiary wall, its benefits and drawbacks and the possibility of puncturing the north and south wall segments to add visibility to the site and increase functionality of the buildings.

Other ideas included:

- Creating connections from the site to other areas;
- Taking advantage of the Laurel Hill Greenway connection;
- Making Silverbrook Road more pedestrian friendly and in general, slowing traffic through the Laurel Hill area;
- Adding another access point to site;
- Using some of the buildings for market-rate residential use to take advantage of the large windows, perhaps creating the “Lofts at Lorton”;
- Retaining the ballpark structures; but using the ball field area to add needed commercial uses while creating a village center such as the Mashpee Commons project in Mashpee, Massachusetts.

Carrie Albee indicated that there was a need to compromise in order to make the site work while adaptively reusing many of the buildings. She noted that under the ULI concept, the compromise included possible demolition of the administration building, punching holes in some portions of the prison wall to increase access and visibility, demolishing the prison chapel and losing the baseball field. Carrie also said the Laurel Hill house should be restored and maintained by the Park Authority.

Richard Perlmutter

Noted that the ULI panel recommended a public/private partnership for the project, and hiring a development consultant.

Questions:

Al Akers: Main street concept is intriguing but ball field has value to the community. How to overcome?

Lee Quill (ULI panel): Create town green and eliminate ball field or keep and loop road around, maybe a smaller field

Sandy Silverman (ULI panel): If parking located elsewhere or within a structure, it may be possible to keep ball field. Could use area for concerts - keep bleacher structures.

Neal McBride noted that a Lorton Town Center concept is planned near the Virginia Railway Express station in Lorton. He also said the area will have 3 shopping centers nearby. Will commercial use be viable at Laurel Hill?

Answer from TAP: Demographics look like commercial would be supportable. Not intended to be a town center. The Lorton Town Center is not walkable from Laurel Hill. Limited to neighborhood serving uses.

Neal Mc Bride: 140,000 square feet (Size of proposed retail center at Laurel Hill) is larger than other centers.

Sandy Silverman (ULI panel): 100 percent housing was considered and rejected because mix of uses needed to create lively area.

Tim Sargeant: How many contributing buildings would be kept?

Answer from TAP: Only Building R-44, the prison chapel, the central administration building and portions of the penitentiary wall would be demolished under the ULI proposal. The majority of the contributing structures would be adaptively reused under the ULI concept. (NOTE: Demolition of the administration building opens up the lawn area)

Doug Wrenn: Concept impressive; creates civic identity, takes advantage of market.

Question from Task Force member: What is housing mix (new vs. adaptive reuse)?

Answer from TAP: ½ new, ½ adaptive reuse, about 400 units total; limit height to 4 stories, fill in some courtyards with connections.

Question: What impact do park activities have on ULI concept?

Answer from TAP: Minimal

Question: Area could be desirable for telecommuting? What kinds of buildings would be needed?

Answer from TAP: Example is George Mason University's telecommuting facility in Fairfax, buildings can blend.

Jim Zook, Fairfax County Dept. of Planning and Zoning: Concept would be a departure from adopted land use plan; Would require adjustments to existing Comprehensive Plan and federal Memorandum of Agreement .

Al Akers to Doug: Any lessons from Silver Spring? Doug: Tradeoffs are inevitable

Tim Sargeant asked what kind of retail envisioned.

Response from TAP: Restaurants in older buildings, post office, UPS store, coffee shop, dry cleaners, and day care.

## **II: Task Force Discussion of Additional Concepts and Next Steps:**

The Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force did not vote to recommend or reject the preliminary concept developed by the ULI panel or any other preliminary concept. Instead, Task Force Chair Tim Sargeant asked the Task Force to endorse a process leading to the study and development of several preliminary concepts. The process includes the following:

- ◆ A market/potential use analysis by EDAW of several preliminary concepts
- ◆ An EDAW survey of potential partners for each preliminary concept.

The Task Force voted unanimously to adopt the process and study the following alternative concepts:

	ULI Proposal 140 K retail 400 dwellings	Modified ULI Proposal (less density)	Educational/ Cultural Public/Private Non-profit	Educational/ Cultural Market Mix
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EDAW was instructed to provide a report of its findings at the December 18, 2003 Task Force meeting.

**III** The Task Force requested that staff find out what the County is doing to stabilize contributing buildings at Laurel Hill. Motion was made by Neal McBride, seconded by Beverly Cosham.

The meeting was adjourned.

***The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Thursday, November 20, 2003, Room 232 at the Fairfax County Government Center.***